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### Gene Healy: Demography determining GOP's destiny

By: **GENE HEALY**  
Examiner Columnist  
March 30, 2010

Last week was a lousy one to be a Republican.

The way things are shaping up, it may end up being a bad century for the GOP as well. That's because most demographic trends show Democratic constituencies growing and traditional Republican ones shrinking.

In 2002, John Judis and Ruy Teixeira published "The Emerging Democratic Majority," predicting a new era of Blue Team dominance based on the rising electoral strength of minority voters and postindustrial professionals, among other groups.

Shortly after the book came out, though, the Republicans gained seats in the November midterms, a vanishingly rare event for a party that holds the presidency. And after George W. Bush won re-election in 2004, GOP guru Grover Norquist poked fun at Judis and Teixeira's poor timing, hazarding a prediction of his own: "The Democrats are likely to be the minority party for as long as a generation."

That doesn't look too prescient today.

Through the lean years and all the in-between years, the D's kept making gains among groups with growing demographic strength. The Bush era saw the addition of 4 million new Hispanic voters, and by midcentury, the Census Bureau now predicts that nearly one in three Americans will be of Hispanic origin.

In 2008, even pro-immigration Republican John McCain could only pull 31 percent of the Hispanic vote.

The GOP has lately drawn energy from the Tea Party legions. But recent polls from CNN, Bloomberg and Quinnipiac University show that the Tea Partiers are overwhelmingly white and rural -- drawn from shrinking demographic groups.

Anyone who lived through the free-spending "Aughties" knows that the fate of the GOP and the prospects for limited government are far from the same thing. So what does all this auger for the future size and ambition of the American state?

Demographic trends suggest shrinking support for the culture war and foreign-policy adventurism. Younger voters are overwhelmingly socially liberal, while two-thirds of Latinos believe we should be out of Iraq, a larger share than the general population, according to the Pew Hispanic Center's polling.

I wish I could say with as much confidence that headlong assaults on the entitlement state were popular. But I'm leery of what Matt Yglesias has termed "The Pundit's Fallacy": the conviction that the policies you favor will be favored by the voters as well.

The elderly are virtually the lone rising demographic that the Republicans hold today. They'll make up a quarter of the population by 2050, and they're not going to support

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deep cuts in entitlements.

Even many of the Tea Party activists -- who trend older than the general population -- may shrink from radical retirement reform. Though 65 percent of the Tea Partiers called Social Security "socialism" in a recent Bloomberg poll, only 53 percent of them wanted to privatize it.

Yet, here's an interesting fact: Recent Census Bureau figures predict that the working-age population will be 55 percent minority by midcentury. It may be hard to imagine the Tea Party movement becoming a Rainbow Coalition. But it's even harder to believe that minority voters will enjoy paying for the (mostly white) baby boomers' retirement and health care while they're working to support their own families.

The looming entitlement crisis may scramble existing political coalitions, with traditional GOP constituencies becoming even more resistant to cuts, while Democratic ones begin to resist paying the freight.

There's an alleged Chinese curse, probably apocryphal, that goes, "May you live in interesting times." We're fated to live through some interesting political times going forward. How much of a curse that ends up being remains to be seen.

*Examiner Columnist Gene Healy is a vice president at the Cato Institute and the author of "The Cult of the Presidency."*

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You're entitled to your guesses like everyone else. But I doubt they're any more prescient than anyone else's.

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America, and conservatism, were built on an idea ... the idea that limiting government to the task of securing our unalienable rights produces the best outcome for all who apply themselves to living

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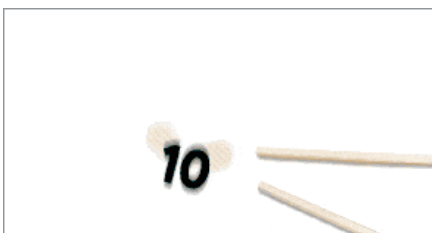
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free and pursuing happiness.

That idea is not limited by demographics ... not any more so than, say, freedom and peace in Iraq is irrevocably limited by the demographics there, as millions of purple fingers can attest to.

It is limited by the lies of those who think they "know better", and wish to keep all of us on their intellectual "plantation".

It is time for our own Awakening ... in fact, it is already occurring.

To borrow an idea from the wisest Man I know ... they shall know the truth ... and their knowledge of that truth shall set us ALL free.

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